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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## Lone Wolf Delusions

04.19.2013 | Culture and Society, Hot Topics, Faculty

University of Dayton terrorism and political violence expert Mark Ensalaco says the suspects sought in the Boston Marathon bombing are more likely lone wolves than Chechnyan rebels. He told Cincinnati's 700 WLW-AM host Scott Sloan in an interview Friday morning the suspects are likely suffering from psychological delusions brought on by isolation, and they believe their violence was part of a larger cause.

(Listen to the interview at the related link)

"This is a variant of the lone wolf domestic terrorist," Ensalaco said. "They come to the U.S., they are socially isolated, they harbor anger for whatever reason. I guess there's a Facebook posting from the older brother saying he's never been able to make an American friend, he simply doesn't understand us."

"And then you get this psychological dynamic where they feel very isolated, they're not sure who they are in terms of their own identity ... and they feel the need to do something dramatic to prove their worth."

"They may think they're fighting for some larger cause, but that's really to satisfy some deep psychological need to belong and to have some identity."

Ensalaco said he is skeptical of media reports that the suspects may have ties to the Chechnyan rebels.

"The youngest is 19, so he wouldn't have been recruited. I don't see this as a Chechnyan operation; I can't even see the motive for that."

He said that if the suspects are trying to advance a cause by attacking the Boston Marathon, it's a stretch to understand what it would be.

"But who knows what delusions they may have had?"

Ensalaco also discussed the prudence of locking down the area around the city of Boston and how law enforcement is handling the manhunt.

Ensalaco is an associate professor of political science who has studied political violence and terrorism for more than 25 years. He is the director of Human Rights Research at the University of Dayton and the author of *Middle Eastern Terrorism: From Black September to September 11*. This week, he's been contacted for his insight by national outlets "America's Talk" on XM Radio, CNN, The Associated Press and *The Christian Science Monitor*; regional outlets WLW-AM in Cincinnati and Minnesota Public Radio as well as media in Finland, Great Britain, Iran, New Zealand, Slovakia, Greece, Turkey and Spain.

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